

Additional Information

Tips For Observing and Photographing Dragonflies

Dragonflies can be loosely lumped into categories of “perchers” or “flyers”. Perchers, such as some of the skimmers, have a usual or favorite perch which they return to repeatedly. Some flyers have a usual route, a beat which they fly back and forth in the same area. You can pre-focus your camera or binoculars on that area to get a close look. Some have a large, long beat and are more difficult to predict, so some luck and persistence are required to find them perched. Most odonates are most active in middle of the day, but some are more active early and late, roosting most of the day in the shade. Be prepared, research and study your subjects first to know the preferred habitats. Binoculars, especially close-focus binoculars are a great aid for observing all nature subjects.

Approach slowly, getting closer and snapping away as you go (with today’s digital cameras, you can always delete later), a good distant shot is better than none and will be of some aid in identifying later.

Try to align planes of focus; for example, a side view is usually good, so move to the side for a clear side view of the dragonfly. A “3/4 view” can show face and eyes as well as the side. Some field marks are more important than others in differentiating one species from another. Get more than one angle if possible.

Sun at your back is always good for photographic detail but be ready to use flash to “fill” in the detail on the shadow side if the subject is back-lit or in any dark situation.

About ATBI

This brochure was compiled and developed by the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) group. ATBI is an on-going project in Tennessee State Parks and State Natural Areas. The goal of ATBI is to document all species in Tennessee State Parks, monitor long-term trends in specific taxonomic groups, and promote education about and preservation of all biodiversity with increased science and citizen education efforts. To access the ATBI database, go to www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi.

For more information about ATBI, please contact David Hill, 7th Floor, L & C Tower, 401 Church St., Nashville, TN 37243. Email david.r.hill@tn.gov. Phone 615-253-2455.

Dragonfly References

Beaton, Giff. 2007. Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast. A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book.

Dunkle, Sidney. 2000. Dragonflies through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America. Oxford University Press.

Nikula, Blair et al. 2002. Stokes Beginner’s Guide to Dragonflies. Little, Brown & Company.

<http://www.odonatacentral.org/>. Dragonfly Society of the Americas. This site has checklists of dragonflies by county.

Collecting of plants or animals in state parks and natural areas is prohibited. Please help preserve Tennessee’s natural heritage by leaving plants and animals for others to enjoy.

NATCHEZ TRACE STATE PARK

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Wildersville, TN 38388-8329
Phone: (731) 968-3742
www.tn.gov/environment/parks/NatchezTrace/

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS DIVISION OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI)

Dragonflies and Damselflies of Natchez Trace State Park and Carroll, Henderson and Benton Counties



Photo © Richard Connors

Welcome to the wonderful world of dragonflies at beautiful Natchez Trace State Park! Of the approximate 154 species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) in Tennessee, 63 have been documented in this park and/or in Carroll, Henderson, and Benton Counties.

Above is a picture of a female *Dythemis velox*, the Swift Setwing. Formerly occurring only south of our area, it has now been found across the state. The Swift Setwing is named for the typical way they hold their wings down at an angle rather than horizontal like most other dragonflies.

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Dragonfly and Damselfly Checklist of Natchez Trace State Park and/or Carroll, Henderson and Benton Counties

Damselflies (Zygoptera)

Broad-winged Damselflies (Calopterygidae)

- ☐ Sparkling Jewelwing
- ☐ Ebony Jewelwing
- ☐ Smoky Rubyspot

Spreadwings (Lestidae)

- ☐ Southern Spreadwing
- ☐ Elegant Spreadwing
- ☐ Slender Spreadwing

Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae)

- ☐ Eastern Red Damsel
- ☐ Seepage Dancer
- ☐ Variable Dancer
- ☐ Blue-tipped Dancer
- ☐ Double-striped Bluet
- ☐ Turquoise Bluet
- ☐ Big Bluet
- ☐ Stream Bluet
- ☐ Skimming Bluet
- ☐ Orange Bluet
- ☐ Slender Bluet
- * ☐ Citrine Forktail
- * ☐ Fragile Forktail
- ☐ Rambur's Forktail

Dragonflies (Anisoptera)

Petaltails (Petaluridae)

- Gray Petaltail

Darners (Aeshnidae)

- * ☐ Shadow Darner
- * ☐ Common Green Darner
- * ☐ Springtime Darner
- ☐ Fawn Darner
- * ☐ Swamp Darner
- * ☐ Harlequin Darner
- ☐ Cyrano Darner

Clubtails (Gomphidae)

- ☐ Unicorn Clubtail
- ☐ Black-shouldered Spinyleg
- * ☐ Lancet Clubtail
- * ☐ Ashy Clubtail
- ☐ Gulf Coast Clubtail
- ☐ Dragonhunter

- ☐ Common Sanddragon
- ☐ Laura's Clubtail

Spiketails (Cordulegastridae)

- ☐ Twin-spotted Spiketail
- ☐ Arrowhead Spiketail

Cruisers (Macromiidae)

- ☐ Stream Cruiser
- ☐ Allegheny River Cruiser
- ☐ Illinois (Swift) River Cruiser

Emeralds (Corduliidae)

- ☐ Slender Baskettail
- * ☐ Common Baskettail
- ☐ Prince Baskettail
- ☐ Fine-lined Emerald
- ☐ Mocha Emerald

Skimmers (Libellulidae)

- ☐ Calico Pennant
- ☐ Halloween Pennant
- ☐ Banded Pennant
- * ☐ Swift Setwing
- * ☐ Common (Eastern) Pondhawk
- * ☐ Blue Corporal
- ☐ Spangled Skimmer
- ☐ Yellow-sided Skimmer
- ☐ Slaty Skimmer
- ☐ Widow Skimmer
- ☐ Great Blue Skimmer
- ☐ Blue Dasher
- ☐ Eastern Amberwing
- * ☐ Common Whitetail
- * ☐ Blue-faced Meadowhawk
- * ☐ Autumn Meadowhawk
- * ☐ Black Saddlebags

*** Documented in the Park.**

Habitat/History

With the many acres of scenic woodlands, the park includes four lakes, a swimming beach, a 47 room resort inn and restaurant complex and other amenities. Located at I-40, exit 116, this area is composed of a State Park, State Forest and a WMA with a

total of 48,000 acres. The park proper is within Henderson county. The state forest and WMA extend into Carroll and Benton counties.

Natchez Trace State Park is named for the famous "Natchez to Nashville" highway, an important wilderness road during the early 18th century. A western spur of The Trace ran through a portion of what is now the park. The park was built as part of President Roosevelt's "New Deal" program. The land was bought from residents who could no longer make a living farming the land because of extensive erosion problems.

Good spots

- *From boardwalk over Cub Creek Lake
- *Along grassy edges of lakes for small damselflies
- *Next to lakes, picnic area at Pin Oak Lake
- *Along dams at Cub Creek and Brown's Creek lakes
- *Open areas, meadows and along park roads
- *Marshy and swampy areas at headwaters of lakes

Notes
